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Peacebuilding Commission
Sierra Leone configuration

Summary record of the 3rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 13 December 2006, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Majoor ..... (Netherlands)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (PBC/SIL/2006/1)

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

2. **The Chairperson** drew the Commission's attention to paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 60/180 and to paragraph 7 of Security Council resolution 1645 (2005), pursuant to which additional members would participate in the Commission's deliberations at the second country-specific meeting on Sierra Leone.

3. He would take it that the Commission wished to hold open meetings under the Sierra Leone configuration.

4. *It was so decided.*

5. **The Chairperson** said that he would take it that the Commission wished him to prepare a summary of its deliberations at the second country-specific meeting on Sierra Leone.

6. *It was so decided.*

Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone

7. **The Chairperson** said that the Government of Sierra Leone was to be commended for its efforts to rebuild the country's foundations. Although progress had been relatively slow at times, much had been achieved. For its part, the Commission was responsible for ensuring that countries such as Sierra Leone were not forgotten in their struggle to emerge from conflict. To achieve its goals, the Commission must engage in open dialogue and strive to be creative, while respecting its resolutions, rules and procedures.

8. **Mr. Koroma** (Sierra Leone) said that, following the first country-specific meeting, held in October, the Government had identified critical areas or gaps that needed to be addressed in order to consolidate peace in the short term. In collaboration with the United Nations country team, donor partners and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the Government had embarked on a number of initiatives, including a youth employment scheme designed to create over 100,000 quick-impact jobs in public works. The scheme had taken off successfully and was already having an impact.

9. The Government had also finalized a comprehensive strategy to reform the top echelons of the civil service; unfortunately, the strategy was on hold, owing to funding constraints. The military, the police force and the Office of National Security all continued to undergo major reforms, supported by the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom, the International Military Assistance Training Team and the Commonwealth.

10. The Consultative Group had recently met with donor partners in Freetown to review the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and to agree on the way forward. One outcome of the meeting had been the signing of a multi-donor budgetary support framework by four key donors. The country had also received support from the United Kingdom, Morocco and China in rebuilding the country's infrastructure.

11. Parliament had approved a much-debated constituency boundary delimitation report and it was expected that parliamentary and presidential elections would be held in mid-2007. Given the implications for peace and democracy, the importance of the elections could not be overemphasized.

12. The recent visit by the Peacebuilding Support Office had been fruitful. At the suggestion of the Support Office, the Government had developed a priority plan and had formulated concept papers which had subsequently been submitted to the Peacebuilding Fund.

13. The Government had recently held a meeting with donor partners at which various concerns had been raised. First, it had been agreed that each area of intervention identified in the peacebuilding process must have a capacity element as a means of addressing both the short-term imperatives and the longer-term requirements of sustainability. Second, Sierra Leone was a post-conflict country with fragile institutions and, as such, it required quick-impact interventions and bridging funds in order to restore public confidence in the peace process. Third, donors had agreed that there was no need to establish new mechanisms or institutions to monitor projects and evaluate the Peacebuilding Fund. Instead, it was hoped to use the pillars which had already been created to implement the poverty reduction strategy.

14. It was assumed that the Peacebuilding Fund would provide the initial funds for quick-impact

projects. However, the Commission also needed to consolidate an overarching strategy for the peacebuilding process. In that regard, a holistic approach would help to eliminate the criticism that the Commission's focus was too narrow.

15. Finally, the Government of Sierra Leone wished to know whether the Commission had a timeline for its actions in Sierra Leone and whether it had developed a programme of activities. The Government also wondered what specific role it was expected to play in the process.

16. **Mr. Angelo** (Executive Representative of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone) said that further progress had been made in the peace consolidation process in Sierra Leone since the last meeting. Preparations for the crucial 2007 elections were well under way and the political parties had signed a code of conduct committing themselves to peaceful, democratic standards and rules. Parliament had approved a constituency boundary delimitation report and the Government had launched a review of its national anti-corruption strategy, in close collaboration with international partners. A review of the Anti-Corruption Act of 2000 had also been recommended, with a view to implementing preventive measures and reinforcing the capacity and powers of the Anti-Corruption Commission to investigate and prosecute cases.

17. At the Consultative Group meeting in Freetown in November, the partners had stressed the importance of renewing efforts in the areas of reform of the civil service, public accountability, private sector development, youth employment and the capacity-building of key national institutions.

18. The Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations had established a joint task force to prepare a priority plan and specific project documents in the four peacebuilding priority areas, namely youth unemployment, capacity-building, the reform of the judicial and security sectors and support for consolidation of democratic institutions. It had been agreed that all peacebuilding initiatives should be linked to existing strategies and programmes to reduce transaction costs and avoid overlapping. Finally, the Government had set up a working group on donor harmonization and aid policy, in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

19. Youth unemployment and marginalization remained the most serious threat to Sierra Leone's stability. To address the issue, the Government had created a Ministry of Youth and had launched a youth employment scheme. A number of development partners, NGOs and the United Nations system were also engaged in youth programmes, including in the agricultural sector. Many of the programmes were small-scale and needed to be expanded. The Commission's strategic approach should therefore focus on investing in successful existing activities, scaling them up and emphasizing management and literacy skills training.

20. Despite recent reforms, the justice and security sectors continued to face serious capacity constraints. Key problems included delayed adjudication of disputes, a large backlog of court cases and poor prison conditions. Transitional measures such as reinforcing alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and deploying additional magistrates to reduce the backlog would help address the most pressing gaps in the justice sector. It was also important to strengthen the coordination capacities of key justice and security institutions such as the Ministries of Justice and Internal Affairs and the Office of National Security.

21. The recent establishment of the National Human Rights Commission was a commendable development; however, in order to implement its mandate, the Commission needed considerable financial and substantive support from both the Government and external partners.

22. The successful conduct of the upcoming elections was vital to the consolidation of peace. It was therefore urgent that Parliament, the National Electoral Commission and the Political Parties Registration Commission should be strengthened. In that regard, it should be noted that there was a $7 million shortfall in electoral funding; if the gap was not bridged by the end of January 2007, the election preparations and calendar of operations would be seriously compromised.

23. With respect to gender disparity, existing laws to combat gender-based violence were not being fully enforced and most of the national legislation did not meet international standards. Women's participation in politics and the upcoming elections also needed to be increased.

24. The capacity and performance of critical public services and institutions remained inadequate. Reform

in that area must be continued to enable Sierra Leone to make sustained progress towards human security in the framework of the Millennium Development Goals.

25. The consolidation of peace and stability in Sierra Leone was closely linked to developments in the subregion. The United Nations teams in Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire had recently held a meeting to discuss joint programming in cross-border issues related to the smuggling of small arms, human trafficking, drug control, youth unemployment and HIV/AIDS.

26. The Peace Consolidation Strategy had been developed to complement the poverty reduction programme, address specific threats to stability and create national capacities for conflict prevention. The process initiated by the Commission should enable further honing of the Peace Consolidation Strategy and the monitoring of its implementation. In that regard, the United Nations was currently preparing a workplan for 2007, which would incorporate the Commission's key recommendations. Work had also begun on the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for 2008-2010.

27. Finally, one of the key post-conflict tasks was the rebuilding of national capacities for development management. At a recent meeting of the Consultative Group, it had been agreed that action must be taken to create short-term absorptive capacities in the Government.

28. In conclusion, the consolidation of peace in Sierra Leone required concerted actions on a limited number of priorities. The Commission's discussions should thus remain focused and action-oriented, with clear outcomes and specific timetables.

29. *A film showing the signing of the code of conduct for the upcoming elections and police training was projected.*

30. **Mr. Gudmundsson** (World Bank), speaking by videoconference from Freetown, said that many of the factors which had contributed to the conflict in Sierra Leone had not been adequately addressed. Despite the Government's decentralization drive, the rural population remained isolated and continued to suffer from a lack of social and economic opportunity. The World Bank was providing funds to support the Government's efforts and was pleased to note that the decentralization of health care had made it possible to respond more quickly to outbreaks of cholera and other diseases.

31. The World Bank was financing investments in power generation and distribution to help alleviate the current power crisis. Additional funds had also been provided to improve roads, with a view to giving the rural population better access to markets. The International Development Association (IDA) was currently preparing a programme to strengthen agricultural marketing in an effort to revive the country's agricultural production base.

32. The World Bank was financing various public works activities to help increase youth employment and was providing support for improvements in public management and governance, including through multi-donor budget support. In the field of education, the World Bank looked forward to support from the Education for All-Fast Track Initiative Catalytic Fund. The World Bank was also working with the Government to improve the health sector and was pleased to note that the Africa Catalytic Fund had provided additional funds, particularly for infant and maternal health.

33. The Government of Sierra Leone and its partners had recently held a Consultative Group meeting in Freetown to review progress on the pillars of the PRSP. They acknowledged that substantial progress had been made on macroeconomic growth and public financial management but noted that the results of measures to combat corruption were mixed. With respect to reviving agricultural production and marketing, they recommended that the Government should begin with activities that did not require much external support. The significant improvements in the field of education had been noted, but the low level of health expenditure was cause for concern. Finally, it had been agreed that the Government needed to strengthen its strategy to increase youth employment.

34. The Consultative Group's conclusions focused on the need for a comprehensive infrastructure programme; better intersectoral linkages in policy reforms; capacity development to accelerate the implementation of the PRSP; greater attention to prioritization of the reform process; and greater efforts by donors to provide the Government with required data on donor activities to facilitate the planning of its programmes. Finally, a memorandum of understanding on multi-donor budget support had been signed by the

Government, the African Development Bank Group, the European Commission and the World Bank.

35. The World Bank was pleased that Sierra Leone would be receiving financial support from the Peacebuilding Fund. It proposed that the funds should be channelled through the current budget support framework, which was backed by four important external partners, namely the African Development Bank, the European Commission, the United Kingdom Department for International Development and the World Bank. With the collaboration of the United Nations team in Freetown, the external partners and the Government would strive to use the funds effectively and in a transparent manner.

36. **The Chairperson** said that the Commission should explore ways in which its strategies and actions could complement the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

37. **Ms. Pierce** (United Kingdom) welcomed the progress made by the Peacebuilding Commission and its focus on the identification of gaps, and commended the Government of Sierra Leone for its successful efforts in consolidating peace and security and the United Nations and other development partners in assisting those efforts. While consultations at the country level between the United Nations, the Sierra Leonean Government and the donor community were to be encouraged, greater collective efforts were needed to ensure that the outcome of the previous meetings of the Sierra Leone configuration were translated into action. Her country looked forward to seeing greater collaboration and consultation between the Government and civil society, NGOs and the private sector, with the assistance of the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL).

38. It was important to enhance and make better use of existing donor coordination mechanisms in Sierra Leone rather than setting up new mechanisms, and to draw on existing strategies such as the PRSP. The Commission should ensure a long-term focus for all post-conflict countries in order to eliminate or at least reduce the risk of a return to conflict, inter alia, by establishing a time frame for engagement. At the same time, however, it was essential to ensure that peace and stability were not only sustainable, but irreversible. The Commission should therefore avoid rushing to conclude the peacebuilding process too quickly. While many challenges lay ahead, the United Kingdom would make every effort to support Sierra Leone.

39. The Commission should build on the previous meeting of the Sierra Leone configuration in assisting Sierra Leone to develop further its strategies and plans for addressing the critical peacebuilding issues identified. It would be useful to draw up a comprehensive assessment of existing activities, identify potential challenges in the short, medium and long term and consider strategies and donor interventions that could be used to meet those challenges; an appropriate time frame should be established accordingly. It was also important to ensure the greatest possible involvement and contribution of stakeholders at the country level, including civil society actors. It was to be hoped that the international community, through the Peacebuilding Commission, could add value in terms of political support, expertise in post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding, and support for action on the ground, and that mapping and strategic plans, including sectoral strategies, would be completed by the next meeting of the Sierra Leone configuration, thus forming the basis for recommendations on strategic priorities. The Commission could develop its mechanisms for monitoring implementation of those priorities as an early warning system for any new challenges that might arise.

40. She welcomed the focus of the Government of Sierra Leone on security and justice as one of its peacebuilding priorities and its efforts to establish a strong and credible Special Court for Sierra Leone, and encouraged all partners to support those efforts. Without justice, peacebuilding efforts would be severely hampered. She therefore supported the Secretary-General's appeal for further funding for the Court.

41. **Mr. Christian** (Ghana) said that, in order to strengthen democracy, every effort should be made to extend greater assistance in improving the capacity of electoral management bodies to discharge their mandate and deliver credible elections in 2007, since successful elections would be a critical step forward in consolidating peace.

42. In the area of capacity-building, it was imperative to develop a comprehensive policy and plan of action for training civil servants in key skills and competencies; to establish competitive merit-based

recruitment and selection criteria; and to offer competitive wages to attract and retain highly skilled management staff.

43. Immediate practical assistance to Sierra Leone was vital in order to enable it to meet its most pressing challenges and to move forward in planning effectively for the medium and long term. Its success in doing so would serve as a model for other post-conflict societies in the West African subregion.

44. **Mr. Dowling** (Ireland) said that greater consultation and coordination with all relevant stakeholders at the country level, including donors and civil society, was needed in order to add value to the development agenda, strengthen the recovery of institutions, ensure the inclusion of civil society and other key stakeholders and support the four key areas identified by the Commission. He endorsed the view that existing coordination and consultation mechanisms could be used to achieve that goal. In that context, the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission remained a valid framework for action, and he encouraged the Commission to assist in their implementation. While it was important to take sufficient time to explore how projects might be implemented or possibly incorporated into other programmes, the Commission should not lose sight of the need to initiate quick-impact activities, such as addressing the funding gap in the election budget, while continuing to consider medium- and long-term measures. Since it was too early to judge the effectiveness of the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund, it was important to build confidence in them; to that end, a public information strategy would be useful. It would also be helpful to identify specific projects of added value which both the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund could address in the immediate and longer term, and to avoid duplication of effort by building on existing frameworks and mechanisms for action.

45. **Ms. Lintonen** (European Community) said that continued political dialogue between the Peacebuilding Commission, the international community, the Government, the opposition and civil society was essential in order to facilitate a comprehensive peacebuilding process. The European Union reaffirmed its commitment to promoting the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission in West Africa. To that end, the Special Representative of the European Union presidency to the Mano River Union would continue to work in close cooperation with United Nations agencies and partners in Sierra Leone.

46. Her delegation supported the recommendations and priorities identified, and expected the Peacebuilding Commission to take urgent action to implement quick-impact projects for the promotion of economic growth, development and employment generation, particularly among young persons, who should be empowered to contribute to the long-term recovery and growth of Sierra Leone. The equal and full participation of women was also crucial for peace and sustainable development.

47. Priority must be given to support for the organization of elections in 2007 and monitoring of the election campaign, inter alia, through the strengthening of the National Electoral Commission and the Political Parties Registration Commission. The European Union endorsed the recommendation that all parties should have equitable access to State resources, media, free campaigning and political expression. It fell to both the Government and the international community to give adequate financial and other support to the framework for the electoral process, particularly in addressing funding gaps.

48. While the European Union welcomed the establishment of the National Human Rights Commission, it was concerned that the budget was insufficient to ensure the effective functioning of such an institution.

49. In the area of justice, the Peacebuilding Commission should help accelerate implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It was also important to establish law-abiding security forces, an effective police force and a reliable and fair judiciary in order to consolidate and build on the success of the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.

50. **Mr. Valenzuela** (European Community) said that it was important to view the peacebuilding process from a medium- and long-term perspective. In that regard, a consultative mechanism should be established to allow more time for the consideration of specific proposals, and more should be done to establish performance criteria and governance requirements and to clarify the implementation aspects of absorption and management capacity requirements. It was also necessary to ensure maximum coherence and

coordination and complementarity with the PRSP and to work on the mapping exercise so as to clarify roles and responsibilities. The overall approach of the Commission should be more targeted.

51. **Mr. Koroma** (Sierra Leone), welcoming the comments made, said that it was time to move from interactive debate to action in order to ensure that the peacebuilding process did not lose momentum. Concrete measures could be implemented in parallel with the ongoing process of identifying priorities and gaps and discussing the finer points of related plans and strategies. Partners in Sierra Leone, particularly donors, were expecting his delegation to return from New York with concrete results. In that regard, the comments and suggestions made by Commission members would be taken into account in order to ensure continued interaction. His Government intended to use existing consultative mechanisms to enrich discussions regarding the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund.

52. **Mr. Angelo** (Executive Representative of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone) said that one of the most critical issues in all post-conflict countries was to ensure the Government's full ownership of the peace and development agenda; the Government should play the leading role in driving that agenda forward. He also welcomed the strong involvement of civil society in Sierra Leone in facilitating the peacebuilding process.

53. Greater consultation was needed between the Government and its key national and international partners in order, inter alia, to finalize priority planning, develop project proposals and reach agreement on the political dimensions of the peacebuilding process in 2007 and beyond. It was also important to expand existing successful projects and to implement short-term measures relating, in particular, to the election budget and employment generation, while continuing to develop longer-term strategies to address other critical issues.

54. **Mr. Malhotra** (India), welcoming the information, presentations and inputs that had been provided, commended Sierra Leone for its efforts to prepare strategy papers, identify gaps and take action on the ground with the limited resources available to it. Since priority tasks and gaps had already been identified and a strategic framework agreed upon, the Commission should provide immediate, targeted assistance in the form of short-term measures on the ground in order to demonstrate its capacity and readiness to respond to requests from the countries concerned and their needs on the ground, while continuing with its mapping exercise. In that regard, particular attention should be given to youth employment and empowerment strategies and reform and development of the civil service and the security sector. India was contributing to security enhancement efforts by building barracks for soldiers in Sierra Leone.

55. It was also important to address the shortfall in funding for electoral preparations. The Chairperson's summary should reflect the need for a precise, action-oriented agenda with a clear indication of an approximate funding envelope, along the lines of that developed for Burundi.

56. **The Chairperson** endorsed the comments made by the representative of India.

57. **Ms. Machon** (Denmark) said that her delegation was encouraged by the good work carried out in Sierra Leone so far, and welcomed the detailed and clear information that had been presented, which had underlined the need to ensure that all peacebuilding-related processes were led at the country level and that the blueprint for priority action was developed by local actors and embedded in local structures. To that end, there should be greater coordination, dialogue and consultations on the ground. While the mapping exercise was important in sharpening the Commission's focus and avoiding piecemeal implementation of its activities, urgent action should be implemented in parallel with that exercise, based on a practical workplan with clear deadlines and division of labour among the various actors involved.

58. In view of the forthcoming elections, it was imperative to strengthen democratic institutions in Sierra Leone and close the funding gap in the election budget as a matter of urgency. Successful elections would be a milestone for democracy and the rule of law in Sierra Leone and a major step towards the consolidation of peace in the subregion. It was therefore vital to bring an end to political intolerance and to ensure a level playing field for all parties and voters, inter alia, by encouraging broad political participation, particularly among young people, women and civil society.

59. In the area of justice reform, the Government and its partners, with the assistance of the Commission, should seek ways to accelerate implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

60. **Mr. Wolfe** (Jamaica) said that justice and security sector reform, capacity-building in the civil service and preparations for the elections, while all urgent priorities, must be addressed from the point of view of risk reduction and sustainable economic recovery. The two went hand in hand. Even if the upcoming elections were successful — which he was sure they would be — the country's fragility could not be ignored. Youth unemployment was a very serious priority gap that needed to be addressed. Short-, medium- and long-term economic strategies were needed and short-term critical needs must be addressed. He recalled the comments made in October concerning the challenge of unemployment among young people — both those who had been involved in the conflict and those who had not — and the sense of hopelessness that could set in if urgent measures were not put in place to enable them to secure gainful employment.

61. The task of developing infrastructure was an awesome one. Even the World Bank had indicated that much more needed to be done, particularly in such areas as opening up rural areas and rehabilitating the agricultural sector. Significant levels of foreign investment were required to do that. Some would question the feasibility of that when it was necessary to develop the private sector. His view was that everything must move in tandem.

62. He hoped that the Commission would continue to focus on Sierra Leone well beyond the elections in order to prevent a return to conflict. The Commission should not only make recommendations, but also listen carefully to the Government and translate words into the critical actions required. It was clear from the comments made by the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone and the World Bank representative that, while significant financial support was being provided, the need for support from the Peacebuilding Fund was critical. He would like the Chairperson's summary to state that critical assistance was needed in the short term. Lastly, he agreed with previous speakers that it was important to consider the short, medium and long terms and keep the process moving forward so as to prevent a return to conflict.

63. **Mr. Deruffe** (France) endorsed the comments made concerning the importance of the justice sector and actions in that area. His delegation would like to know how the Government intended to move forward on that issue.

64. He also agreed that the Commission was, by nature, a process. It was very important to understand that. The mapping exercise would enable the Commission to identify gaps in action taken on the ground, sector by sector and partner by partner. He welcomed the comments by the World Bank representative regarding the complementarity between the Bank's work on infrastructure, on the one hand, and youth unemployment, on the other. The mapping exercise could be used to highlight not only areas not yet covered, but also the interaction between those areas.

65. He agreed that there was a need for coherence and coordination on the ground. While coordination was, of course, at the heart of the UNIOSIL mandate, a large part of the Commission's work was to ensure that such coordination worked well.

66. Lastly, while short-term action was of course desirable — and, indeed, the reason why the Peacebuilding Fund had been established in the first place — the Commission must not neglect the link between short-, medium- and long-term priorities.

67. **Mr. Kodera** (Japan) welcomed the recent developments in Sierra Leone, which he hoped would strengthen the peacebuilding process. Since the previous country-specific meeting on Sierra Leone, Japan had been supporting that process bilaterally, for example by providing assistance to the health sector in collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). His Government was firmly committed to supporting peacebuilding bilaterally and through the Commission.

68. As the provincial and national elections drew near, political stability and security were of major concern. Youth unemployment was a critical factor in that regard. It was essential to foster among young people, through job creation, a sense of sharing in the dividends of peace. At the previous meeting, a number of delegations had proposed concrete measures such as vocational training, quick-impact projects and microfinance. He would be interested to know how those proposals would fit into the youth employment and empowerment programme that had been

established in Sierra Leone and what obstacles there were to job creation, in addition to the funding constraints already mentioned.

69. The upcoming elections would be a touchstone for democracy and peace in Sierra Leone. The international community must redouble its efforts to fill the funding gap, which, according to the Secretary-General's latest report, stood at around $7 million. While welcoming the positive developments outlined by the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone, his delegation also wished to know what international assistance was needed in order to ensure that the upcoming elections were free and fair.

70. The security sector, the role of which in a post-conflict country could not be overemphasized, was clearly in need of further reform. While the progress made so far was encouraging, much more needed to be done to make the sector more sustainable. In his delegation's view, the sector should be given high priority among possible areas of Peacebuilding Fund disbursement in the country. Furthermore, he would appreciate it if the Government of Sierra Leone could further clarify the activities that had been identified for further consideration at the previous meeting, in particular insofar as they related to the security sector.

71. Lastly, he welcomed the progress made in the area of public financial management and the establishment of a senior executive service to ensure public service delivery. His delegation would like to learn more about that mechanism and its potential impact on capacity-building.

72. **Ms. Gross** (Germany) endorsed the comments made concerning the importance of election preparations and the need for further justice and security sector reform and welcomed efforts made in the areas of dialogue with civil society and outreach to rural populations.

73. Youth unemployment was a major challenge, if not the major challenge, and the main focus of Germany's cooperation with Sierra Leone. She was curious to hear Sierra Leone's and the World Bank's assessment of the private sector's role in addressing youth unemployment and the marginalization of young people, particularly women, and of how the private sector could be involved in, and enhance, the Government's youth unemployment programme. In that connection, the Commission should explore the possibility of hearing from a private sector representative at its next round of country-specific meetings.

74. At a recent meeting with NGOs, an NGO representative had suggested that the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission should be taken out of the general framework of justice and security sector reform and addressed as a separate issue. She was curious to know whether or not the representative of Sierra Leone and the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone thought that such a move would bring added value.

75. **Mr. Verbeke** (Belgium) said that, in order to be most effective, the Commission needed to coordinate well with donors and establish priorities. He agreed that the establishment of priorities should not become a bureaucratic exercise; rather, the situation needed to be studied in depth so as to identify urgent matters that needed to be addressed. It would also be useful in the future to have preparatory documents in advance of the meeting.

76. Belgium welcomed the progress made in the security sector, in particular the establishment of the Office of National Security. While youth unemployment was a matter of concern, the Commission must not focus exclusively on that; there were other priority areas too, such as the justice sector. Action in the justice sector might not deliver such quick results, but it was still very important, since an effective and legitimate justice sector was essential to consolidating peace and preventing a return to conflict.

77. The election process was very important for several reasons. First, the elections were likely to enjoy considerable media attention. If they were held according to the rules, they would therefore be a unique opportunity for Sierra Leone to attract foreign investment. The Commission had already identified support for the electoral process and its institutions as a cornerstone of its action. It was therefore important to provide support, particularly financial, to such institutions as the National Electoral Commission and the Political Parties Registration Commission. However, such support would yield fruit only if the various candidates created a basis for healthy political dialogue. The report by the Secretary-General submitted to the Security Council just a few days earlier highlighted a culture of intolerance between the

various political parties. It was important to correct that trend. The fact that eight political parties had signed a code of conduct was very encouraging. Action by the Commission would be in vain if it were not accompanied by efforts by national actors in areas requiring considerable funding.

78. **Mr. Brusco** (Italy) said that the Sierra Leonean Government should be in the driving seat, as the successful consolidation of peace lay primarily in its hands. The Commission's primary objective was to empower the Government and people of Sierra Leone. The Commission and the Government must work together to strengthen the sovereignty of the State, by enhancing the effectiveness and credibility of national policies and institutions. The Commission's first objective should, therefore, be capacity-building. Its second objective should be delivery. The people of Sierra Leone had offered tremendous support to the Commission; very soon they would be demanding tangible benefits.

79. Combining those two objectives, the Commission needed to come up with a formula that increased Sierra Leone's political and economic security, sovereignty and independence. The Commission must therefore be more than just another donors' conference. That was not to say that the issue of direct financial support was not a concern. Italy shared the focus on the upcoming elections and the need to rally resources through the Peacebuilding Fund, and other means, to secure their outcome. However, the Commission's added value should lie in helping the Government to create the preconditions for donors and, most crucially, trade and investment to increase.

80. As previous speakers had pointed out, economic growth was essential in peace consolidation. Sierra Leone's resources were immense, not least in relation to its potential to develop a flourishing tourist industry. The Commission should be an agent of structural change and articulate a comprehensive strategy based on, inter alia, good governance, the rule of law, security sector reform and incentives for foreign direct investment.

81. The Commission should select, for each sector, a limited but detailed set of key policy directives and key projects aimed at kick-starting, through the Peacebuilding Fund, those lines of action. It was important to have on board the relevant financial institutions and subregional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Mano River Union. The private sector should also be fully involved in the process. The Commission might also consider providing for ad hoc trade and investment development expertise, both in the Peacebuilding Support Office and at UNIOSIL, as well as elaborating, in cooperation with the Government, a system of benchmarks to assess progress on good governance and the rule of law. Lastly, his delegation supported the request for a precise timeline for the division of labour and systematic briefings on follow-up.

82. **Mr. Gaspar Martins** (Angola) said that in his view the process should be micromanaged, not out of New York, but out of Sierra Leone. As others had said, the Government should be in the driving seat, with the full support of the international community.

83. The fact that the mechanism for support of the Peacebuilding Fund, as contained in the World Bank document, involved the participation of the four partners was welcome, as it might help the Commission to better address one of the concerns raised by the representative of Sierra Leone, namely the need for speedy delivery and quick-impact actions. The existence of that mechanism in the country could certainly help the Commission to move faster. He would be interested to hear further comments on that issue.

84. He would also be interested to know whether any specific action was being taken in Sierra Leone to encourage the private sector to be more involved and more active, particularly on youth unemployment.

85. **Mr. Melrose** (United States of America) said that the Commission and the Government of Sierra Leone had already agreed on the key priorities facing the country. Now action was needed to continue that process. The issue of disaffected youth had been a significant factor in creating the ten-year-long conflict. While youth employment was critical, it was also necessary to find sustainable ways of maintaining that employment, through private sector investment in such industries as fisheries and agriculture. Tourism had also been a factor in the past. His delegation hoped that the Commission and the Government of Sierra Leone would together seek a long-term, sustainable process, as well as a more immediate fix.

86. **Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt) agreed that the Commission needed to sharpen its focus. It could do

that by helping the Government directly; addressing the main challenges outlined by the representative of Sierra Leone; and ensuring that the Sierra Leone envelope was granted speedily in order to allow activities to go forward, in particular the preparations for the elections.

87. The Sierra Leone envelope should go directly to the Government, not to United Nations activities, so as to consolidate national ownership of the process and support the work being done by the Government. It was important to make that distinction. He hoped that they would be able to agree on a sum to be included in the Chairperson's summary. In order to do that, the Government of Sierra Leone should give the Commission a clearer idea of what specific actions were needed and how much they were going to cost. The Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund could then come up with an estimate of the most immediate requirements, which could be covered by the envelope. Requirements for the second stage could be considered before the next country-specific meeting. He hoped that country-specific meetings would be held more frequently to enable the Commission regularly to evaluate the situation and decide what further action and support was needed.

88. It was also important to avoid overlap. The Sierra Leonean representative had mentioned a document signed by four donors and the Government of Sierra Leone. The Commission needed to ensure a balance between assistance from bilateral donors, on the one hand, and support from the Peacebuilding Fund and Peacebuilding Commission, on the other, in order to avoid duplication.

89. **Ms. Pratt** (Network for Collaborative Peacebuilding in Sierra Leone), speaking as the representative of civil society in Sierra Leone, said that most of the concerns raised so far were shared by civil society. Since the previous meeting, civil society organizations had been informed about, and consulted on, the conclusions of that meeting. The fact that the eight priority areas developed at the national civil consultations held in July 2006 were in line with the four priority areas agreed at the previous meeting had made it easier for civil society organizations to interact with their members and to participate in the Peacebuilding Commission Task Force that had been set up in the Office of the Vice-President. Consequently, civil society enjoyed a good working relationship with both the Government and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The aim was together to design the next steps for the Commission's work in Sierra Leone and build on the progress made so far. In order for the Commission's objectives in Sierra Leone to be achieved, such issues as piecemeal implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the poverty reduction strategy, massive youth unemployment and inadequate resources for public institutions still needed to be addressed.

90. Turning to specific gaps, she said that youth employment and support for the electoral process, in particular the National Electoral Commission and the Political Parties Registration Commission, were both critical. Civil society engagement in the electoral process would help ensure that the elections were credible, which in turn would help achieve sustainable peace in the country.

91. Since the previous meeting, her organization had also engaged in a number of public information activities aimed at raising awareness of the Commission. It had briefed the press and civil society organizations on the peacebuilding process and to what extent they should be engaged; organized a forum for heads of civil society organizations to help them better understand their role; and established a Peacebuilding Commission working committee, which continued to hold discussions with partners on the way in which they could incorporate some of the strategic areas that the Commission had identified for Sierra Leone. Civil society had also approached the Centre for Conflict Resolution in South Africa with a view to together mapping out a strategy for civil society engagement to ensure that the Commission's objectives for Sierra Leone were met. Other activities included regional public information and education campaigns and strategic engagement with various stakeholders. However, there continued to be constraints. She mentioned, in particular, the lack of resources; the need for strong coordination with Government, particularly on the strategic areas identified; and the importance of developing strong and reliable partnerships.

92. Sierra Leone was at a crossroads. Support was needed to give the people of Sierra Leone the opportunity to engage with each other so that by the time the elections were held, most of the threats to peace and security would have already been eliminated.

93. **The Chairperson** said that everyone seemed to be moving towards the same objectives and priorities. He noted, in particular, the importance of civil society engagement. Today's discussion had been very focused. The Commission now had a more precise idea of the critical gaps requiring urgent attention. Everyone was aware of the urgent need for quick-impact solutions.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.